

higher in April than it was in March. The crisis is still growing. Encounters with single adults on the border were 613 percent higher last month versus April of last year, when the Trump administration put emergency measures in place. Encounters with unaccompanied children were up 2,217 percent year over year. Let me say that one more time: 2,217 percent more kids, without parents, at our border on President Biden's watch.

The administration has tried to boast that the number of unaccompanied kids in the custody of the Department of Homeland Security has gone down. It has. It is because they have transferred large numbers of kids from DHS to HHS. There are now more than 19,000 children in the custody of Health and Human Services, and hundreds more are arriving every single day.

We know why all of this is happening. When Washington Democrats spent years reciting the mantra "Abolish ICE; abolish ICE," people listened. When our new President spent his campaign signaling he would support a weaker border when he expressed that he supported providing government healthcare to people here illegally, people actually took note. Now the Democrats cannot get control of the crisis that they have stoked.

The Vice President—supposedly, the point person to fix illegal immigration—has yet to even visit the southern border.

Apparently, Secretary Becerra's operation at HHS has, in some instances, left migrant children stranded on buses for multiple days—exactly the kind of unacceptable mismanagement that Senate Republicans feared we might see under an HHS Secretary without relevant healthcare or management experience. Last week, HHS announced it would be taking money that was meant to replenish the Strategic National Stockpile—money to fight this pandemic and future pandemics—to help with the migrant crisis.

Well, today, the Senate will consider another amendment from the senior Senator from Wisconsin. It would stop the Biden administration from canceling contracts that are already in place to build a wall on our southern border. Perhaps our Democratic colleagues will help us begin to address the border crisis this administration has caused.

FOR THE PEOPLE ACT OF 2021

Mr. MCCONNELL. Now, Mr. President, on a completely different matter, as Democrats have pushed their massive political takeover bill, S. 1, Americans' First Amendment rights and privacy rights have been thrust into center stage. The legislation contains multiple elements that would chill Americans' exercise of free speech and let Washington bureaucrats hoard more of citizens' private information without cause. We know exactly how this could go wrong.

Remember President Obama's IRS scandal? Unelected bureaucrats treated organizations differently and subjected Americans to unequal scrutiny depending on their beliefs. Nonprofits with a whiff—just a whiff—of conservative beliefs were slow-walked and singled out for unfair treatment. Or think back to 2014. The Obama administration had to reach a settlement after a government worker leaked confidential information about a conservative group, which was in violation of Federal law. Unsurprisingly, those private details found their way to a liberal group that had plenty of ideas about what to do with them.

Courts have found that the State of California has repeatedly leaked or inappropriately released confidential information about nonprofits' donors. Last year, in remembering all of these incidents, the Treasury Department finalized action on a basic, commonsense principle: If there is no legitimate reason for the IRS to have certain information, then the IRS shouldn't collect it.

It makes sense.

The prior administration had the IRS stop the blanket collection of non-public information about citizens who make non—I repeat, non—tax-deductible contributions to certain organizations. Contributions to 501(c)(4) organizations are not tax deductible. The IRS doesn't need these details just for kicks and giggles, but now the Democrats' political takeover bills would roll back this step and open new fronts in the far-left war on privacy and free speech.

S. 1 would narrow the protections of the First Amendment. It would empower the Feds with new authority to track and police the speech of Americans. This is the same bill that would essentially make Washington Democrats the board of elections for every county and State in America. I guess, somehow, maybe, that wasn't enough.

Well, I have worked with my colleague from Indiana, Senator BRAUN, on legislation to nip one part of this nonsense right in the bud. Our bill would codify the rule issued by the last administration. Americans would remain free from a Federal dragnet collecting private information that it neither needs nor uses for legitimate law enforcement purposes—information that can be mishandled or, worse, used to target and harass Americans based on their views.

So I am proud to stand with Senator BRAUN, with 39 Republican cosponsors, and with citizens across America, across the political spectrum, who don't need the IRS peering into their First Amendment activities any more than is strictly necessary. I would certainly urge all of our colleagues to support our simple bill.

TRIBUTE TO KEVIN GROUT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on one final matter, my Senate office is

losing a talented and dedicated young staffer this week. Fortunately, he has just been on loan from his home State—our home State—all along, and he is now heading back to the Bluegrass.

Kevin Grout started with me 5 years ago. This bright, sharp, and cheerful, young McConnell Scholar from the University of Louisville began as a staff assistant in the mailroom or, you might say, as sort of my "body man." But in this line of work, talent attracts responsibility. Before long, Kevin had graduated to serve as the speechwriter in my personal office. In 4½ years, he has helped me craft more remarks, op-eds, and written statements than any of us could possibly count—almost all focused on issues that matter most to Kentuckians.

We are sorry to lose Kevin's talents here on the team, but Kevin and his wife Addie are taking their careers and their young son Henry and putting down roots where it all began. Washington will be sorry to see them go, but it will be Kentucky's good fortune to welcome him back.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

ENDLESS FRONTIER ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 1260, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1260) to establish a new Directorate for Technology and Innovation in the National Science Foundation, to establish a regional technology hub program, to require a strategy and report on economic security, science, research, innovation, manufacturing, and job creation, to establish a critical supply chain resiliency program, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Schumer amendment No. 1502, in the nature of a substitute.

Cantwell amendment No. 1527 (to amendment No. 1502), of a perfecting nature.

AMENDMENT NOS. 1523 AND 1518

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the clerk will report the following amendments by number.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Oklahoma [Mr. INHOFE] proposes an amendment numbered 1523.

The amendment is as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 1523

(Purpose: To express the sense of the Senate and establish points of order to ensure the United States adequately funds national defense with a whole-of-government investment plan for strategic competition with the People's Republic of China)

At the appropriate place, insert the following: